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Two Poems

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there is a fragment of dylan thomas in all of us

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mother
called us a wild
flock of ripe blueberries
for we bellowed at the farmer's sheep
in our walloping welsh voices like a blooming
curve of waves against swansea bay we scoundrel boys
never desire to go gentle into that good night the old fragile bloke
over yonder the green hills with only one tooth left it has decomposed
and morphed into a gloominess of muddled petroleum like our fathers, brothers, and
uncles clinging to their prayers down the asthmatic rhondda mines the old fragile bloke was
once a pulsating butterfly filled with wonderment, thirst, and hunger for nectar but his welsh
skin shredded into a shade of tooth abscess and the bushel redness in his cheeks are paler than a soft
lamb wandering the northern hills of conwy valley while the fresh northern waft clings to his moist
nose laughter is buried in the arctic earth with frozen bodies that could not produce a warmth for
their tribes those moons ago in the age of dearth elaborate rosy daffodils are scattered in his garden
now bare a dank fragment of jaundice sprung from the dirt to the lush roots and the pinkish petals
our fathers broke up the earth
with their newborn feet and
their creamed teeth carved
a polished smile waiting to
hear the clank of silver in
their coarse hands but their
delicate hearts secretly wanted
to languidly snooze under the
glossy moon while drinking the
farmer's milk under the apple bough
in laughter and church hymns now their
white woollen beards and slogged mouths
ache for the golden days of youthfulness

Mary Lake

Mary Lake is a sacred treasure chest where jewels and ornaments are filled with nostalgic memories of savoured moose track ice cream dripping from our sunburnt mouths. The waft of Muskoka pressed against our pale metropolis skin for the first time. The children's fingernails were covered in fresh dirt, worms, and brittle rocks near the thundering rapids under the bridge. The rapids on one side of the bridge are filled with laughter and mucky hiking boots while the other side is serene like a clan of swans circling little waves of calmness. The lively campfires were our only torchlight, while all the islands from a distance were silent and veiled until dusk. We drenched ourselves in smoky marshmallows and foamy hot chocolate that warmed our bellies in the cool and crisp midnight air. Wild black bears are roaming in the forest above our delicate campfire, waiting for us to flee the lake and return to our hundred-year-old wooden cottage. The musky floorboards creak and howl in the breezy evening twilight; each floorboard marks a historic opaque footprint of a fisherman. Pine trees are our morning perfume; our polluted nostrils thank mother nature for the waft of pine trees, fresh eggs, bacon, and the firm doe and her timid fawns. Tangled fingers in fishhooks replacing digital wires. We touched bass, perch, and muskie; all flopping and thumping their bright scales in our scraped and weather-beaten canoe gasping and clinging to their breath for a splinter of life. Mary Lake is a microcosm of British Columbia; except more quaint and private, a personal confinement no other could marvel or witness. Muskoka sunsets were made for us, wrapped in a precious bow unravelling the warmth of a Monet-esque work of art. Sunsets filled with wonderment and tangerine delight. John Wayne would have ridden off into the sunset with his wild horse and Western drawl. Yet, there are no horse's hooves thundering in Mary Lake, or a galloping clan of cowboys. There is only a soft rustle in the northern trees, a garden snake, a black bear, or a white-spotted deer standing silently above the forestry hill over Mary Lake. Grandmother Great, Dorothy White, made her peculiar tomato melted bagels. I caught the waft from the boating docks, a long path down from the feast-filled cottage. We all dashed to Grandmother Great's tomato melted bagels, dropping our fishhooks and kayak paddles in Mary Lake. There is a reddish-brown cliff island on the other side of our cottage where daring souls would climb the rock-strewn cliff and with all their hearts and bravery. Leaping off their feet with a laughter-filled splash until Mary Lake clung to their bones. I searched for Robert Frost at the boating docks, but then I found a trace of his ideas of human nature in Mary Lake. I wish to pack up this holiday into my suitcase, to neatly fold every Muskoka fragrance from the pine trees to moose track ice-cream cone melting in my hand. The children could gather their sand buckets to collect all of Mary Lake. I want the whole piece of this holiday, the whole circumference of the cherry pie, not simply a sliver or piece. I want every speck and inch of crumb on my lips. I will wash it down with fresh milk. I would pack it all and carry it until the bones and limbs creak and crack. Yet, it will forever be etched in memory; when the wisps of red hairs morph into grey and white.

KARLI WOODS is a poetry editor for *The Missing Slate* and is on the editorial board for *The Fiddlehead*. Her works have been published in the *Canadian Journal of Family and Youth*.